

Amendments to the Drawings:

The drawing sheet attached in the Appendix includes new Figure 53. The drawings have been changed as follows: new Figure 53 has been added.

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action dated February 28, 2005.

Applicant's representative would like to thank the Examiner for conducting the personal interview on May 5, 2005, to discuss the outstanding Office Action and cited art. While no agreement was reached, patentable features were discussed and recognized by the Examiner.

DRAWING OBJECTIONS

Applicants have amended the drawings and the specification to address the first objection raised by the Examiner on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action. A new FIG. 53 showing an adapter joining two connectors is now more clearly shown. The specification has also been amended to describe the new figure.

The connector holder panel in the second objection raised by the Examiner corresponds to the connector holder module 37 of FIGS. 1 and 2, and the bulkhead 182 of FIGS. 47 and 48. No amendment of the specification or drawings is believed necessary on this point.

Applicants respectfully submit the drawings are no longer objectionable for the reasons stated in the Office Action.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

With respect to pending claims 1-19, claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16 and 19 are independent. As discussed in the interview, independent claims 1, 3, 4, 5, and 11 all recite features associated with apparatus and methods including dust caps associated with the connectors to be stored. The cited art does not teach or suggest storing connectors within an apparatus while dust caps are present protecting the ferrules of the connectors in the manner recited by the claims.

Independent claim 1 was specifically rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Roth (6,240,229). Roth concerns an adapter for joining two connectors, wherein each connector includes a ferrule brought into close alignment with the ferrule of the other connector, to thereby allow signal transmission. Roth does not teach or suggest any structure

which allows for assemblies 16, 18 to receive a connector including a dust cap mounted directly about the ferrule. The dust cap of Roth is plug 26 which is received in an opening of the adapter device. Plug 26 blocks access to any connector being inserted in the same end. Moreover, plug 26 is not mounted to the other connector directly about the ferrule. For these reasons, claim 1, and claim 2 which depends on claim 1, are patentably distinguished over the cited art.

Independent claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Roth plus Waldron (6,234,683). Neither Roth nor Waldron teach or suggest the recited fiber optic connector holders configured to receive a fiber optic connector with a dust cap in place directly about a polished end face of the ferrule of the connector. For these reasons, claim 3 patentably distinguishes the cited art.

Independent claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Roth. Claim 4 recites similar features to claim 1 with respect to the connector holders on the first panel to selectively receive a first plurality of connectors each including dust caps fitted directly about ferrules of the connectors. As noted above, Roth does not teach or suggest a connector holder which receives a connector including a dust cap fitted directly about the ferrule. For these reasons, claim 4 is patentably distinguished from the cited art.

Independent claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Roth. The method of claim 5 includes the steps of inserting the connector of a first patch cord into a connector holder of the connector holder module without removing the dust cap, withdrawing the connector from the connector holder, removing the dust cap from the polished end face, and inserting the connector into the adapter of the adapter module. Roth does not teach or suggest removing a connector from the connector holder with a dust cap on the connector, and then removing the dust cap before inserting the connector into adapter module. For these reasons, claim 5 is patentably distinguished from the cited art.

Claims 6-10 add further features to claim 5 and are patentable for this reason. Claim 6 concerns replacing the connector holder with an adapter. Roth does not teach or suggest this additional method step.

Independent claim 11 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of Roth. Claim 11 recites withdrawing a selected one of the first plurality of connectors from the connector holder of the first panel, removing the dust cap from the first end of the selected connector and inserting the first end of the selected connector into one of the adapters of the second panel. Roth does not teach this method. Roth concerns a plug 26 which is received in an opening of the adapter device, which blocks access to any connector being inserted in the same end. For these reasons, claim 11 is patentably distinguished from the cited art.

Independent claims 12, 14, 15, 16, and 19 do not recite the dust cap feature of claims 1-11. Instead, these claims recite the connector holder and the adapter features in a different manner. Claims 12-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Solheid (6,760,531). Claims 12-15 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Wheeler (5,497,444), or Roth. Claims 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Solheid or Roth.

Claim 12 recites that the cabinet includes at least one adapter panel with at least one adapter, and at least one fiber optic holder panel with at least one fiber optic connector holder. The connector holder includes an opening configured to receive a fiber optic connector inserted longitudinally relative to the connector axis.

Claims 12 and 13 were rejected as being anticipated by Solheid, Wheeler or Roth. None of these references cited by the Examiner teaches or suggests any fiber optic connector holder panels. All of the devices disclosed use adapters for joining two connectors on opposite ends of each adapter. There is no teaching or suggestion of utilizing any of the adapters as connector holders. None are utilized in a manner for storage.

Similarly, claim 14 recites an adapter panel and a cable connector holder panel wherein the connector holders are configured to receive a fiber optic connector inserted longitudinally relative to a connector axis. None of Roth, Wheeler or Solheid cited by the Examiner teaches or suggests this feature.

In a similar manner, claim 15 recites first and second panels. In the first panel, an array of connector holders is provided for selectively receiving a first plurality of connectors in one

end of the connector holders inserted longitudinally, the opposite end of the connector holders configured to not be matable with any of the connectors. The second panel in claim 15 includes an array of adapters for selectively receiving the first plurality of connectors in one end of the adapters, and opposite ends of the adapters configured to be matable with a second plurality of connectors. The art cited by the Examiner only discloses adapters of the second panel. None of the adapters are configured to not be matable with any connectors. For these reasons, claim 15 patentably distinguishes the cited art.

Claim 16 is directed to a method including extending a first patch cord from the distribution module into a cable management structure so that the connector of the first patch cord is proximate a fiber connector holder. The method of claim 16 further recites inserting an end of the fiber optic connector of the first patch cord into the connector holder for storage. Claim 16 further recites withdrawing the connector of the first patch cord from the connector holder, and adjusting the first patch cord within the cable management structure so that the connector is proximate a fiber optic adapter mounted within an opening in a front of the adapter module. The end of the connector of the first patch cord is inserted into the adapter so that the optical fiber of the patch cord is optically connected to a second connector inserted within an opposite end of the adapter. Solheid cited by the Examiner does not teach or suggest this method. All of the adapters in Solheid are used to connect to connectors on opposite ends of the adapter. None are utilized in a manner for storage. Roth has a similar disclosure. For these reasons, claim 16 patentably distinguishes the cited art.

Claims 17 and 18 add further features to claim 16 and are patentable for this reason. Claim 17 concerns replacing the connector holder with an adapter. Neither Solheid or Roth teaches or suggests this additional method step.

Independent claim 19 concerns a method of connecting telecommunications cables including providing a first panel including a plurality of connector holders for selectively receiving a first plurality of connectors individually inserted into first ends of the connector holders in a direction of the longitudinal axis of each connector. A second panel is provided including a plurality of adapters for selectively receiving the first plurality of connectors individually inserted into the first ends of the adapters in a direction of the longitudinal axis.

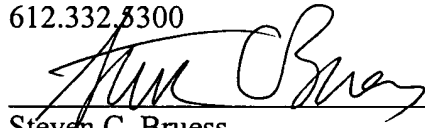
Opposite ends of each connector holder are not connected to fiber optic cables, and opposite ends of each adapter are connected to fiber optic cables. The method of claim 19 further recites withdrawing a selected one of the first plurality of the connectors from one of the connector holders, and inserting a first end of the selected connector into a selected one of the adapters so that the selected connector is optically connected to a second connector inserted in the opposite end of the selected adapter. Solheid does not teach or suggest this method or the two panels. Instead, all of the adapters in Solheid are for joining two fiber optic cables. Roth teaches a similar arrangement. For these reasons, independent claim 19 patentably distinguishes the cited art.

Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested. If a further interview with the Examiner, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number noted.

Respectfully submitted,

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